

livestock Xchange



International Livestock Research Institute

Think Piece
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ILRI

Betting on modern sciences and technologies – and a more balanced approach to livestock research for development

John McDermott

For the November 2011 'liveSTOCK Exchange' event at ILRI, John McDermott, the outgoing deputy director general and director of research, reflects on the evolution of ILRI's research over the past eight years and the future of livestock research for development.

'Some of what I'm most pleased about us doing in the past few years is making ILRI's research much more relevant to development. Thinking through strategies for ensuring livestock help poor people and the specific impact pathways this work can take has really helped us to restructure our research in ways that are much more meaningful for development.

'Also, we've put a big bet on modern sciences and technology, especially biosciences. We've made big investments to get biosciences facilities built here on our Nairobi campus, investments that included such exercises as conducting comprehensive environmental impact assessments. It's critical for the future that we leverage these new facilities and our technological skills to make agricultural biosciences really work for the poor.

'There are challenges and opportunities for livestock-for-development work in the future. The big opportunities are that people are beginning to recognize that livestock are really important for increasing incomes and employment for the poor.

But we have to manage the negatives and look at how to improve the environmental sustainability of livestock production and also cut the disease risks associated with livestock production and consumption.

‘When we started with a new strategy (2002–2003), we accentuated the positives about livestock development and pretty much ignored the negatives. Now we have a more balanced approach that is

looking both to enhance the positives of livestock enterprises and to mitigate the negatives.’

View a video interview:

<http://ilriclippings.wordpress.com/tag/livestockx/>

Contributed by John McDermott, outgoing Deputy Director General at ILRI.

On 9 and 10 November 2011, the ILRI Board of Trustees hosted a 2-day ‘liveSTOCK Exchange’ to discuss and reflect on livestock research for development.

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